Teacher Certification Changes Announced

Department of Education

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New academic and professional standards for those holding or seeking a teaching licence in Nova Scotia will take effect this fall as a result of regulations approved by the provincial cabinet.

The new regulations follow extensive consultation with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Nova Scotia School Boards Association and teacher education institutions.

The changes in the regulations raise standards for those entering the profession, reduce the number of certification levels and promote ongoing professional development for all teachers.

Education Minister Jane Purves said the new regulations establish a quality standard for teacher certification in Nova Scotia.

"There is a strong connection between teacher certification requirements and quality education. We are improving teacher certification to make sure Nova Scotia has the best teachers in the right positions," Ms. Purves said.

Brian Forbes, president of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, said the new regulations recognize the importance of the teacher as a life-long learner and underscores the direct relationship between teacher training and student learning.

"These new regulations continue the Nova Scotia tradition of preparing and ensuring the continuance of a highly qualified teaching force for the benefit of all students in the province," Mr. Forbes said.

The new regulations offer a number of benefits for the Nova Scotia education system. Specifically, they include:
-- New standards for teacher training will ensure teachers are well prepared to enter the classroom
-- All teachers will be required to take part in at least 100 hours of professional development during each five-year period
-- Professional development provisions will be reviewed by the government and union after three years to ensure they are effective
-- The regulations are consistent with the government's commitment to ensure all teachers are given the professional development opportunities they need
-- New teachers will be certified to teach at the elementary or junior high/high school level, in accordance with their teacher education training

-- Teachers wishing to upgrade their classification level will be subject to the new standards
-- The number of certification levels are reduced from eight to four
-- Teachers already in the school system will have their current certification levels protected unless they fulfil the requirements necessary to raise their level
-- The regulations confirm the province's existing two-year university programs for teacher training

The issue of new certification standards was first raised by the legislature's Select Committee on Education in 1992. Subsequently, a teacher certification review committee was organized. It included representatives from the government, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, school boards and teacher education institutions. This led to a 1998 teacher certification report, upon which the government based its new regulations.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

Standards are being raised for those seeking or currently holding a teaching licence in Nova Scotia.

Starting this fall, new teachers must be certified to teach at either the elementary or secondary school level.

In addition, all teachers will be required to take part in at least 100 hours of professional development every five years.

The new regulations reduce the number of certification levels from eight to four. Teachers wishing to upgrade their certification will be subject to improved standards.

The new regulations also confirm Nova Scotia's existing two-year university program for teacher training.

Education Minister Jane Purves says the changes will establish a standard of quality for teacher certification in Nova Scotia.

The changes follow wide consultation with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the school boards association and teacher education institutions.

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